

Two Unique Cuban Covers Found Last Year

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I opened my email one morning last year to see this urgent note from Rudy Roy (LM 1124): “Robert - an ID cover!!!! Pattern A&C. I don't intend to bid on it unless you won't. Course, if you don't want it, just let me know.”

Of course Rudy is the Dean of Cuban perfin, my mentor who started me down this *lonesome* path a few years ago. I quickly heeded his call and looked up the eBay listing he had passed along. Its title was only “CUBA 1930s perfin cover to Canada”. Notice how the clever seller put a space in the middle of CUBA to avoid being picked up by eBay's computer as a possible embargo item (it is not). “Current price: \$9.99”.

I couldn't believe my eyes. Rudy had first discovered the elusive and quite scarce A&C perfin off cover and reported on it in the *Cuban Philatelist* back in 1973. He did not speculate on its ownership. It remained unidentified in the 1992 *World Perfin Catalog*. Two Cuban philatelists, Fernández and Díaz, speculated in an article in 2000 that the owner was “Avery & Co.”, but indicated the hypothesis was not proved by a cover. I had come to believe that Avery & Co. was the owner, but had all but given up hope of ever finding a cover, given the fact that I had only accumulated two off cover perfins of the company.

Imagine my surprise to find ACOSTA & Co. on the corner card. That changed all my thinking. I

immediately started to Google for more information.

Despite a thorough search, I was only able to find one reference to the Havana company, an ad placed in the *Paper Makers' Directory* of 1920, which I display as Figure 1.

Needless to say, I put an extraordinarily high snipe on the item. For a week I waited nervously, wondering if there were going to be other bids. I checked the listing several times a day. The final result was anti-climactic; I was the only bidder. I paid and awaited delivery.

The cover, illustrated as Figure 2, came with three stamps, which is great since that increases the total number known by about 30%! The two 2¢ stamps are different printings of the Gómez issue: one from 1917 and one from 1918 when they changed ink because of wartime shortages.

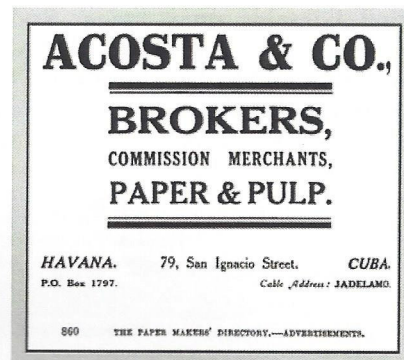


Figure 1—Advertisement for Acosta & Co. in the *Paper Makers' Directory*, of 1920

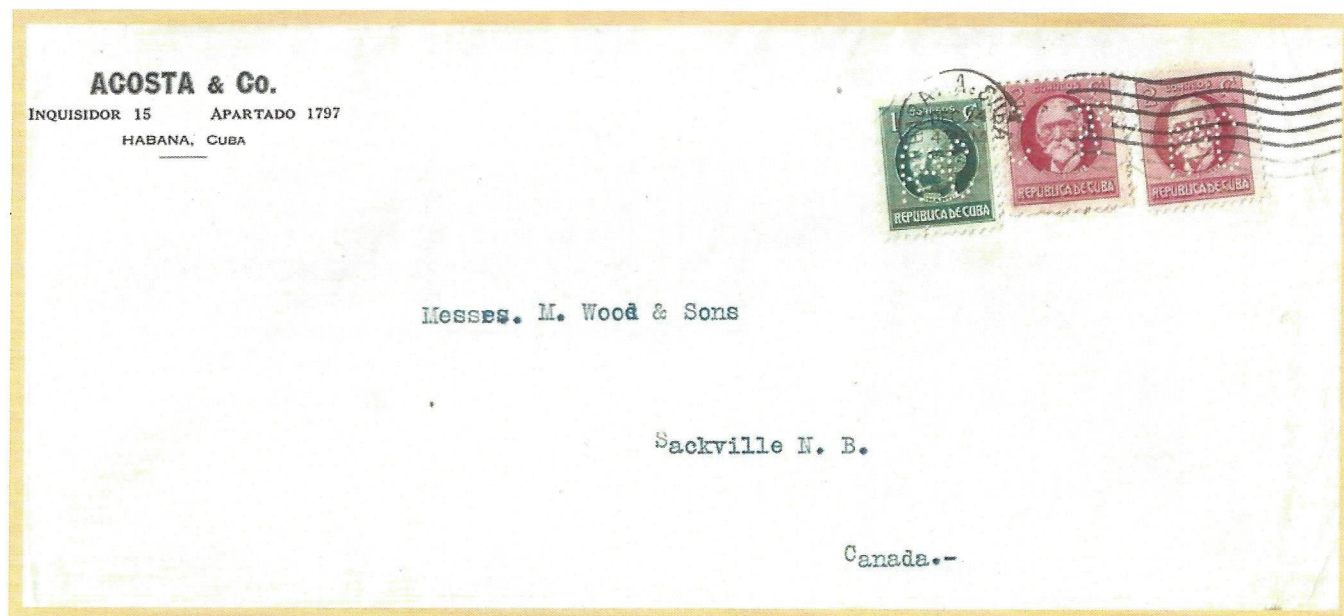


Figure 2—Discovery cover identifying Acosta & Co. as being the pattern owner of the A&C perfin

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Two Unique Cuban Covers Found Last Year (continued)

Several months later after the Acosta & Co. cover find, lightning struck twice. Rudy Roy got an email from an individual living in New Jersey stating that contrary to what was published on the Rudy Roy's *Perfins on the Stamps of Cuba* website about O&C not being documented by cover, he had such a cover.

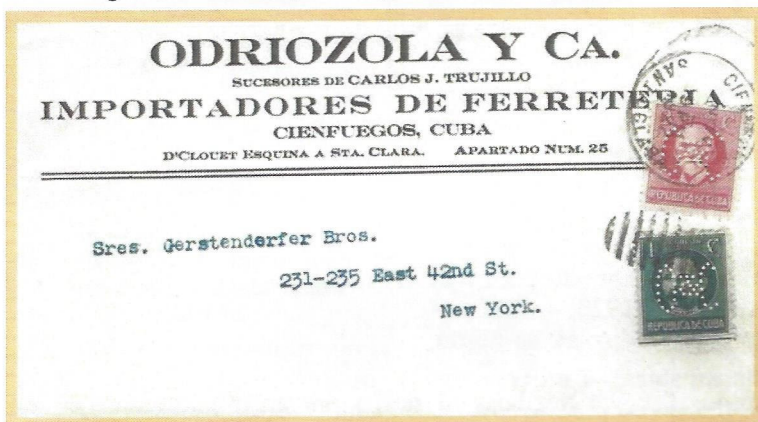


Figure 3—Unique perfin cover of Odriozola y Ca. from Cienfuegos, Cuba, to New York City, 1922

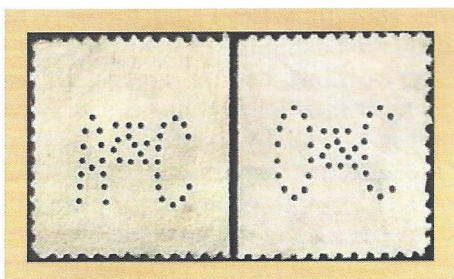


Figure 4—Reverse images of the A&C and O&C off cover perfins. The first is shown in a mirror image to display the initials properly.

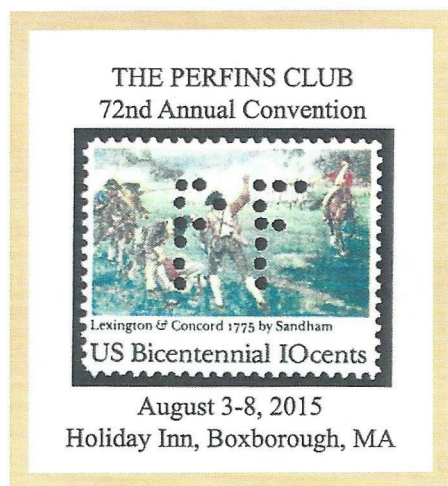
Rudy again passed that information on to me and I immediately emailed the gentleman. He was an agreeable fellow and we hit it off, especially when he learned that I was the author of *Postal Cards of Spanish Colonial Cuba*, a copy of which he owned and was well used by him.

He admitted that he was a novice on the computer and didn't know how to email a scan, so he agreed to color copy the O&C cover and send it. He did. The cover is shown as Figure 3. The reverse scans of both A&C and O&C off cover perfins is shown as Figure 4.

Odriozola & Compañía was a company in Cienfuegos that imported and distributed hardware. We find perfins on the Patriots issues of 1917 and the watermarked Patriots of 1925. I previously found a cover without perfins on a decorative advertising cover of 1939.

This discovery chips away at the Cuban companies not found with identifying covers.

We still have to find a cover for Empresa Naviera de Cuba (ENC), although one was supposedly owned by Cuban Philatelic Society of America member Alfredo Valdes, but its likeness has never been published and his collection seems to have disappeared after his death. Also not documented by cover are José Llano (JLL), Monroe & Company (M&co), New York Life (NLY), and National Paper & Type Co. of Cuba, S.A. (NPT), although years ago Rudy Roy showed a personal use picture postcard with an NPT perfin in the *Cuban Philatelist*. We are whittling away at the number of undocumented Cuban perfin pattern owners on cover. If you have one, let me be the first to know!



See you in Boxborough!!!

For Convention information, including hotel information and reservations, see Page 73 in this issue.

For Convention registration information, including 2015 Convention Registration Form, see Page 56 in the May/June 2015 issue of the *Perfins Bulletin*.